

United States Senate

April 26, 2016

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Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and Administrator
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Herbert Hoover Building, Room 4898
Fourteenth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Strickling,

Among the most significant concerns of my constituents in Arizona's rural communities, including on tribal lands, is broadband internet access. As you may know, Arizona is home to 22 tribal reservations, including portions of the nation's largest, the Navajo Nation. While Arizona has seen progress in broadband availability and speeds thanks in part to significant investments by the private sector, more work must be done, particularly in rural parts of the state. These areas could most benefit from the educational opportunities, economic growth and medical and emergency services made possible through improved broadband access.

With this in mind, I write to enlist the technical expertise of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) BroadbandUSA program in partnering with Arizona stakeholders to improve broadband infrastructure in the state.

Relying on the expertise acquired through its work administering broadband-focused grants, NTIA's BroadbandUSA is now "providing communities with technical and strategic advice on how to expand broadband access and adoption." Based on conversations among staff, I appreciate your organization's willingness to work with Arizona communities to provide this expertise.

I also understand that as part of its mission, BroadbandUSA is carrying out a series of regional workshops to aid communities seeking to expand local broadband deployment by providing "free hands-on technical assistance, toolkits, guides, webinars and other support." NTIA has completed six of these regional workshops to date, from California and the Pacific Northwest, to Mississippi and New England. Given the unique and significant challenges facing Arizona and the southwest region in deploying broadband, particularly in rural areas and tribal lands, I believe Arizona would be a fitting location for a future regional workshop.

This workshop would be an opportunity for state, local and federal officials, tribal leaders, the private sector, broadband providers, and other community members to come together to better understand the challenges Arizona faces, to examine successful broadband efforts from other parts of the country, and to identify solutions for Arizona's digital future. Based on

conversations I have had with communities in Arizona proactively working to improve broadband infrastructure, I believe a regional workshop organized by NTIA and BroadbandUSA would receive enthusiastic support in the state. Please let me know if scheduling such a workshop in my home state is feasible in the near future.

Expanding high-quality and reliable broadband is necessary to ensure all Arizonans have access to basic telecommunications services for health care, public safety, and education, and to be sure these communities can be tap into 21st century opportunities in economic development. I appreciate your support in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John McCain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "McCain" clearly distinguishable.

John McCain
U.S. Senator